

Letter from Mabel Hubbard Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, October 27, 1896, with transcript

Letter from Mrs. Alexander Graham Bell to Dr. Alexander Graham Bell. 1331 Connecticut Avenue, Washington, D. C. Oct. 27th 1896. My darling Alec:

I can hardly realize that you are only in Truro tonight, not yet at Beinn Bhreagh, it seems such ages since you left. I do miss you so, the house seems so quiet and empty without you. You have no idea how you fill it by your mere presence. Margaret Mauro told her mother that after you came into the room at Twin Oaks you seemed to fill it so that she saw no one else. And I think this is but a true description of the effect your personality has on one.

There is nothing new to say. Alice Buck wrote me saying what a nice time she had with us, how much she enjoyed the fun and affection among us. I went out to Twin Oaks, and in the evening went to your Father's where we played whist for a long time.

This morning Marion Page and I had a bicycle ride in the old riding academy. She did very well, the man never let go of my handle bar.

Elsie is working two hours a day at her French and one hour on physics. I am wading through a book of Freeman, the historian's. The subject is one in which I am much interested and which is intensely interesting , but he handles it in about the vaguest most uninteresting way. You have to made through pages of stuff for a grain of information, and when you get it you can't put it in its proper chronological order. For one thing to be sure he assumes that you know a lot more than you do. What was the "deed of Batak." It will give you an idea of the construction of his sentences when I tell you that one of 2 them contains 605 words by actual count! What do you say to that, you who scold me when mine stretch out beyond a bare fifty words? This sentence begins near the end of

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one octave page and ends about the middle of the third! It is a panegyric on the Greek tongue, and this one word occurs 26 times in it. Yet I thought Freeman is considered one of our first historians. After all when you do get hold of one of his grains of information they are apt to be such as give one pause. As for instance he says that the great invention of modern government is representation. In ancient Greece and Rome representation was unthought of. The inhabitant of ancient Gaul who prided himself on the name of Roman citizen had to travel all the way to the Imperial city if he would exercise his privilege of voting. That other man could be appointed to represent him never occurred to any one. The citizen of ancient Athens or Sparta voted in the great voting place of the city and if subject cities sent people to vote in the voting place these people voted in their own names and their votes counted as those of individuals, never as persons representing others. Is this not strange. I do not however, like Freeman or feel any confidence in his judgement, he is so terribly bitter in his enmities. His pet antipathies are Austria and the Turk, and he cannot find too hard things to say of both or of those persons so misguided as to say a good word for either. Well I have told you of what I have been reading, and you probably think I have told too much. Now go ahead and tell me what you are doing and thinking of and I won't think you too prolix.

I hope you cold

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I hope your cold isn't worse. It is almost as warm as summer here.

Always yours, Mabel.